

Old Town Historical Committee
July 14, 2008
Monday
5:45 PM

Minutes

Call to order: Mr. Jarvis called the meeting to order at 6pm. Present for roll call were Mr. Jarvis, Mr. Deeds and Mrs. Rush-Ekelberry. Also, in attendance were Mayor Ebert, Mr. Neimeyer, Mr. Garrett (Main Street Program), Mr. Garvin (Main Street Program), Mr. Note (Landmarks) and Mr. Strayer (Development Director).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mrs. Rush-Ekelberry moved to approve the minutes of the May 12, 2008 meeting, seconded by Mr. Deeds.

VOTE: **AYES: Mr. Jarvis, Mr. Deeds, Mrs. Rush-Ekelberry**
NAYS:
Motion carried.

Pended Items:

06-01 Interurban Building Update

Mr. Jarvis stated that in the last 7-10 days, Village staff has brought in architects and engineers from EMH&T to put together the bid package for the Interurban Building.

Mr. Jarvis removed the rest of the stucco from the north side of the building. There were a couple of openings found at that time. The architects stated that some of the openings on the north side of the building will have to be opened, including 2 doors and a window. The rest of the openings will be covered over with a non-functioning shuttered window or door.

The conceptual drawings and samples and applications will be brought to Landmarks. Mayor Ebert checked with EC Babbert's to see if they would construct a concrete obelisk with a single iron rail to replicate the old rail by the train tracks.

Much progress has been made and with cooperation from the Landmarks Committee, this project will be well underway.

Mr. Jarvis has been in contact with a gentleman from Downtown Columbus that is aware of an Interurban rail car located in Columbus and will be working with him to locate this car and possibly get pictures and/or ownership of the car for the Interurban building. The car is approx. 9ft wide x 12 foot high x 50 foot long.

Mr. Sims has been working with EMH&T on the bid package and believes that it will be 95% complete in 2 weeks and then will be able to go out for a general contractor.

New Items for Discussion:

08-02 Old Town Overlay District Compatibility Review

Mr. Neimeyer passed out the overlay review study and showed where there are possible conflicts between the current zoning and the review.

Mr. Neimeyer will get copies to Landmarks Committee.

Mr. Jarvis asked for clarification. Mr. Neimeyer stated that the zoning status needs to be amended to reflect the wishes of the downtown overlay, so that if a developer wants to build a drive-thru, for example, we would have the ability to deny that request.

Mr. Jarvis asked what we are trying to accomplish. He believed that it was a way to give gentle guidance to a developer, or is it a straight-jacket to not allow anything that doesn't fit with the overlay?

Mr. Deeds stated that he wanted to make sure that if someone came in and wanted to follow Main Street's guidelines, nothing conflicted with the zoning code. He was trying to head off any arguments in the future. It looks like this shows any potential conflicts between what was recommending and current zoning.

Further discussion ensued regarding the handout.

Mr. Garrett asked for clarification. He believed that the old codes stated there would be no drive-thrus permitted, but he is seeing on "Conditional Uses" that it is the first one listed.

Mr. Deeds stated that nothing needs to be resolved tonight, but that the issue was put on the table for discussion.

Mr. Neimeyer noted that the zoning code is the law and the assessment is a recommendation. The zoning code must be followed.

Mr. Jarvis asked then, if, for example, we decided that a recommended use for a strip of land is parkland, but it is currently zoned General Commercial, could they say that within this area in the overlay district, parkland would be permissible? Mr. Neimeyer stated that, yes that would be appropriate.

Mr. Jarvis would like to have this information in front of Landmarks and Main Street to review and firm up those recommendations and then Mr. Neimeyer would present it to Planning & Zoning for any other coordination that needs to be done.

Mr. Garrett added that he would like to have Mr. Neimeyer check out Animal Kennel and Animal Hospital, as he thought they would not be allowed in the overlay district.

Mr. Deeds requested a copy of the overlay.

08-03 Marathon Station – Update of Redevelopment Status

Mr. Strayer stated that the Central Ohio CIC is working with the office of Urban Redevelopment to get the application filled out and take care of whatever needs to be done so that we can get approval to pull the tanks out and get the site cleaned up.

Mr. Strayer also talked to the Franklin County Treasurer Ed Leonard who said that there may be additional funds available to lessen the cost.

Mr. Jarvis asked if there is a projected cost of the demolition and clean-up. Mr. Strayer stated the clean-up will be about \$150,000 and will be funded by the state with a revolving loan fund. Our matching share is to pay for the demolition of the building. Approximate cost is not known at this time.

The additional monies could be applied to the revolving loan fund or to the cost of the demolition.

Mr. Strayer believes that the building will come down in the early fall of 2008.

Mr. Garvin, of Main Street, stated that this needs to go to Landmarks. Mr. Strayer noted that it did indeed need to get a demolition permit. Landmarks is given the opportunity to catalogue the property and take photos.

There are some potential developers looking at the site.

08-04 Denny Building – Update

Mr. Jarvis stated that this refers to the 2-story structure between the Denny building and the Fusion center building. Old photographs show that there used to be an alley there which allowed access to the rear of the buildings.

Mrs. Rush-Ekelberry believes there is a stairwell there.

Mr. Garrett noted that it is an enclosed stairwell used to access the 2nd story of the building where people are currently living.

Mr. Jarvis noted that it is an eyesore and has an absentee landlord. He asked if it is considered a landmark. He wants to get it to look better than it does. Is there a way to bring about changes through zoning law or code enforcement?

Mr. Neimeyer stated he can have it reviewed under the Property Maintenance code.

08-05 Davis Paints/Lumber Yard – Can Mayor's Court Help?

Mr. Jarvis moved to table this item. Mr. Deeds seconded the motion.

VOTE: **AYES: Mr. Jarvis, Mr. Deeds, Mrs. Rush-Ekelberry**
NAYS:
Motion carried.

Old Business:

Mr. Note noted that minimum maintenance standards aren't being met in many storefronts in the downtown area. He wonders if Main Street organization is thinking of ways to encourage the businesses to fix up and keep up the exterior storefronts of their buildings.

There are many residents within the Village limits who have never even visited Downtown Canal Winchester. He believes this can be changed by updating and keeping up the Downtown area.

Mr. Jarvis asked if he believed it to be an issue of cost or just the fact that the owners live with it so long and just don't see it anymore.

Mr. Note believes that it is an issue of people just not paying attention anymore. Curb appeal is being overlooked. There could be a vibrant downtown area if this is addressed.

Mr. Jarvis stated that there is not a vehicle for an incentive program at this time.

Mr. Garrett stated that Heritage Ohio has a grant for bricks and mortar projects, and a micro-grant project could be made where small amounts are granted for sod and improvements. There is a possibility the next time this grant opportunity comes around there could be a pool of money to be used for this purpose. He could apply for only that which Main Street recommends.

Mr. Jarvis said this would be a good candidate and a great experiment to see if it would encourage business owners to keep up with their curb appeal.

Mr. Garrett will bring this idea to the board.

Adjournment:

Mrs. Rush-Ekelberry moved to adjourn this meeting of the Old Town Committee and was seconded by Mr. Deeds.

VOTE: **AYES: Mr. Jarvis, Mr. Deeds, Mrs. Rush-Ekelberry**
NAYS:

Meeting adjourned at 6:55P.M.